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AUTHOR Murphy, Joyce A.
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ABSTRACT

The Maryland Teaching Effectiveness Network (TEN) is a long range staff development program for teacher education faculty, principals, and supervising teachers. The goal of TEN is to create and maintain a continuum between campus based courses and school based field experience in teacher education programs. A three-phase process is used to hold the continuum. In the first phase, teams from institutions of higher education are selected and trained. In the second phase, after higher education faculty achieve some comfort with the material, school principals and central office staff are added. The third phase involves the coordination of supervising teachers with the team. A brief study of the effectiveness of the program, and attitudes of participants toward the TEN program, determined that all of the personnel involved felt that the program was responsive and effective in bridging the gap between campus education and field based experience. All participants benefited from the program. (CB)

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THE MARYLAND
TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS NETWORK

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BY

JOYCE A. MURPHY

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Maryland Teaching Effectiveness Network (TEN) is a long-range staff development program for teacher education faculty, principals, and supervising teachers. The goal of TEN is to create and maintain a continuum between campus-based courses and school-based field experiences in preservice teacher education programs. The continuum sought is based on the use of a defined set of theories, princip and practices as well as the vocabulary accompanying these.

A three-phase process was used to hold the continuum. In the first phase, IHE teams were selected and trained. In the second phase, after the higher education faculty had achieved some comfort with the material, school principals and central office staff were added. At the present time in the third phase, all of the IHEs have added supervising teachers to their teams.

More specifically, the objectives of TEN are:

1. To facilitate the connection between preservice programs and school observation sites, specifically assuring explicit teacher models and mentors who use the same terminology and learning principles as used in college educational psychology and methods courses.

2. To support the development of supervision and coaching skills by college/university supervisors and LEA supervising teachers so that they will reinforce a common core of learning principles through analysing teaching and labeling behaviors.

3. To support the ongoing training, 1984-86, for a cadre of IHE teacher educators and LEA supervisors, who will become trainers for additional persons in 1985-87.

4. To coordinate the collection of data for evaluating the T.E.N. program improvement and training process and the teacher education graduates' competence, using an external evaluator.

5. To promote possibilities for individual and/or collaborative research studies using or related to the overall T.E.N. project.

During the Maryland Teacher Education Program approval cycles since 1971, team findings frequently indicated that teacher education preparation was commonly disjunctive. In many situations, required program courses were not explicitly related to one another in concepts or terminology for the student. In most cases, there were increasing difficulties in having those concepts and terms which were introduced in teacher education courses on campus being recognized, used, and enforced by teachers and others in local schools where preservice students were placed for clinical and practicum experiences. In addition, most colleges described having less authority in selecting sites and teachers.

These observations were similar to those of a national study of student teaching conducted by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education located at the University of Texas at Austin.[1] Griffin

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[1] Gary Griffin, Clinical Preservice Teacher Education: Final Report of a Descriptive Study. Austin, Texas: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, the University of Texas at Austin, March 1983

reported that there were consistent findings regarding content and terms used in supervisory conferences with student teachers. In these conferences college supervisors and school supervising teachers rarely referred to professional concepts or terminology and showed little attempt at relating the student teaching experience to prior program courses or experiences. Research on effective teaching was seldom, if ever, discussed. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the student teaching experience provided attention to the comfort and caring of the student teachers and satisfaction with child contact, but little professional guidance based on a carefully conceptualized view of student teaching. Articulation with other teacher education learning experiences was weak.

The research questions for this project relate to the usefulness of assured continuity of concepts and terms perpetuated through planned, focused objectives agreed upon between college instructors and local school system educators.

A growing body of literature supports staff development as a critical component for all curriculum implementation and school improvement efforts (Berman and McLaughlin 1978; Gall, Hailey, Baker and Perez, 1983, Stallings, 1983, and Sparks et. al. 1985). Furthermore, many school districts across the country are expending considerable resources for staff development. For example, Howey and Vaughn (1983) cite a study by Hyde and Moore (1982) estimating that expenditures for staff development range from $1000 to $1700 per teacher per year in large urban school districts. Almost every proposal for school reform and school improvement based on "effective schools" research calls for large doses of staff development focused at the school site and conceived as a long-range, continous process.

While staff development for teachers is becoming more informed and the whole enterprise expanding rapidly, there has been an absence of effort to translate these practices for teacher educators in higher education settings and there is a paucity of information about how training and development can be tied to and used to improve programs initiated in the late 60's under the auspices of the Trainers of Teacher Trainers Project and Teacher Corps (see Lanier, 1983), few examples of staff development for the teachers of teachers can be found in the literature. Further, we do not have good information about the extent of professional development activities currently participated in by teacher educators or those type of staff development activities deem most appropriate by them. Neither have we studied what kind of staff development experiences will impact instruction and program improvement in teacher education programs.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEN PROJECT:

Five colleges and universities selected for involvement submitted plans which identified:

- One program area for implementation of the overall purpose (early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, or special education).

- Specific faculty members who agreed to participate in the basic institute(s) and subsequent activities as well as in the data

DATA COLLECTED TO-DATE, 1984 - 1986 Cont'd

2. Year Two (1985-86)--The same three pronged interviews are being conducted with each IHE faculty member, 60% of the principals, and 2-4 teachers in each school where principal is being interviewed. In addition, syllalic and course assignments including field work are being collected. Audio-taped supervisory conferences are being collected on a random-sample basis. A part-time graduate student is funded to collect and analyze these data.

FINDINGS

Data regarding implementation of common content and vocabulary through teaching, modeling, and supervision are still premature to report until the 1986 spring data collection is completed. However, other facets of the data reveal information about the higher education participants and their past staff development experiences

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Participants in the project were characterized by 16 men and 12 women, 19 persons with doctorates and 9 with masters degrees, and an age range of 35 to 70 with an average age of 48. All participants except one had prior experience in public school teaching. Seven had been principals and the total years of education experience for the group ranged from 10 to 50 with an average of 24 years.

We do not want to imply that the 28 teacher educators participating in this staff development project accurately represent the total teacher education population in Maryland or the Nation. Perhaps, however, it is not too far off. Characteristics, for instance, are very similar to the national population described by Joyce et. al. (1977) where they found that teacher education faculties were characterized by two-thirds men, an average age of 43, and over 90% with work experience in the public schools prior to assuming college or university teaching positions.

Participants were asked to list staff development activities in which they participated during the past two years. Although this is not the place to go into a detailed analysis, the number of activities and the time spent by each person was considerably less than reported in previous studies of staff development of teachers in the public schools (see Arends, 1982; Arends, 1984; Gall et. al. 1984, and Joyce et.al. 1984, for example). Activities listed by teacher educators in this project were predominantly short (a few hours), consisted of seminars or collequia and most often on topics associated with mainstreaming and multicultural education.

Questions on the interview protocal also ask for information about professional memberships, conference attendance and where the teacher educators in the project look for information about new ideas for content and strategies for their courses. The average participant in the project belongs to four associations, attends on the average of 2 conferences per year of which 75% percent are within the state. Over 90% list their own colleagues as the most important source for new

information. Only three persons in the sample belong to AERA and only two to ATE. Major professional association affiliation consists of local chapters of PDK and state affiliates of ASCD, ATE, and several specific subject matter organizations, such as NAEYC. Participants were also asked how much financial support they had received for professional development activities. A large percentage listed less than $100 per year. This is consistent with an analysis of budgets in Maryland we did that shows that less then $100 per year is spent on each faculty member's travel or professional development. This can be compared to the earlier reported public school figure of $1000 to $1700 per teacher annually.

The implications of this information, from our perspective, are quite clear. As we think of staff development for teacher educators, we must consider that most will be in mid-career and many approaching retirement within a decade. Most are oriented in their professional affiliations to state rather than national networks. Few are involved or closely connected with the AERA, the major research arm of the profession. Almost all are experienced educators having spent considerable time in elementary and secondary schools as teachers and administrators before moving on to positions in higher education, and not too different from their public school colleagues, teacher educators look to each other for information about new ideas and techniques as contrasted to other dissemination channels.

Compared to most business organizations or even to large school systems, staff development programs in higher education are very primitive. Few resources are allocated for this purpose and norms in higher education promote the concept of the independent teacher/scholar as contrasted to sustained program or organizational improvement. Chairs and Deans are admonished to encourage faculty development--but strategies of which we are aware promote self-development, expertise in research, or specific teaching techniques such as how to increase class participation or test construction. Most strategies hav e been aimed at the beginning professor, new at teaching and uninformed of pedagogy. Faculty development strategies are most often characterized by the sabbatical, the faculty exchange, or short seminars. Few instances that we know of focus efforts toward the experienced teacher such as those found on teacher education faculties; even fewer focus on intensive staff development aimed at curriculum innnovation or organizational improvement. Training approaches characterized by instruction over time, with opportunities to practice and receive feedback and a chance to transfer new learning to the day-to-day teaching situation are nonexistant in higher education. Yet these approaches are those found effective with teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

Some would argue that if such staff development processes existed that they would meet faculty resistance. Evidence from the TEN project indicate that this probably is not accurate. The 28 faculty participants basically had favorable reports toward those types of experiences. For example, quotes from TEN faculty following the week-long institute included these: "This was the most outstanding and motivating workshop

I have ever attended." "This was worthwhile because we can use our experience." "It is quite interesting how my concerns have changed within this week." I was challenged by the opportunity to work with collegues from across the state." "Excellent opportunity to coach and support one another in a collegial environment." "This was the first time in my 12 years of college teaching where someone has given me feedback. Even earlier, as a public school teacher, I was given feedback only once."

It would appear that if funding (cost of training), leadership and appropriate staff development designs are present, that teacher education faculty will respond to the challenge of growth just as do their colleagues in elementary and secondary schools.